

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 129786

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (SMITH, HUNTER)

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPED AMERICANS: DAVIS-MBEKA MEETING

REF: KINSHASA 4655

1. ASST. SECRETARY DAVIS CALLED IN ZAIRIAN AMBASSADOR
MBEKA JUNE 3 AND DURING HOUR-LONG DISCUSSION STRESSED URGENT
HOPE FOR QUICK, FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM GOZ TO PLAN FOR
VAGNI TO CONTACT KIDNAPPERS.

2. DAVIS OUTLINED VAGNI PLAN IN GENERAL TERMS, NOTING IT
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ALREADY DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL WITH GOZ BY AMBASSADOR
HINTON. SAID PLAN HAD BEEN PREPARED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
DUTCH GOVERNMENT; HAD AGREEMENT OF STUDENTS' PARENTS AND
THEIR REPRESENTATIVES; BURUNDI GOVT PROVIDING CERTAIN

FACILITIES TO SUPPORT EFFORT; AND TANZANIAN GOVT HAD NO OBJECTION TO ITS GOING FORWARD. DAVIS SAID US HAD NO INTENTION, HOWEVER, OF MOVING AHEAD ON PLAN IF GOZ HAD OBJECTION. IN VIEW OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH KIDNAPPERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, FAVORABLE GOZ REACTION TO VAGNI PLAN WAS URGENTLY NEEDED.

3. DURING ENSUING DISCUSSION DAVIS STRESSED OUR CONVICTION, BASED ON EXPERIENCE IN OTHER CASES, THAT CONTACT WAS ESSEN-

TIAL FOR PURPOSE NOT ONLY OF DETERMINING WELFARE OF HOSTAGES BUT FOR INFLUENCING KIDNAPPERS TO LISTEN TO REASON AND SCALE DOWN THEIR ORIGINAL DEMANDS; ABSENCE OF CONTACT POSED RISK TO HOSTAGES' LIVES AND THE LONGER THERE NO CONTACT THE GREATER THAT RISK BECAME. IN REPLY TO MBEKA'S EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PLAN FOR "PRIVATE INTERMEDIARY" WAS BEGINNING TO SPILL OUT INTO PRESS, DAVIS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS THERE HAD BEEN SOME REPORTS RE STEINER (SOME OF WHICH INCORRECT REGARDING HIS DESIGNATION TO MAKE DIRECT CONTACT WITH KIDNAPPERS) BUT THAT WE ATTEMPTING TO HANDLE MATTER WITH UTMOST DISCRETION. HOWEVER, DAVIS NOTED, THE LONGER VAGNI MISSION DELAYED THE MORE DIFFICULT THESE EFFORTS BECAME.

4. MBEKA SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD US CONCERN, BUT THAT MATTER INVOLVING BOTH IMPORTANT HUMANITARIAN AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS POSED DIFFICULT DECISIONS FOR GOZ. HE PROMISED TO CONVEY DAVIS DEMARCHE TO KINSHASA IMMEDIATELY, BUT THEN ADDED IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DISCUSS CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION PERSONALLY WITH FONMIN BULA WHEN THEY MEET "IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY" JUNE 5. (WHILE MBEKA DID NOT SPECIFY WHERE, HE IMPLIED SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE.) DAVIS EXPRESSED STRONG HOPE THAT WE COULD HAVE GOZ REACTION WITHOUT LETTING ANOTHER TWO OR THREE DAYS GO BY. INGERSOLL

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